

Claim 1. A seal element comprising:
a base pipe;
a screen disposed at said base pipe; and
an expandable material disposed radially outwardly of said base pipe and said screen.

Claim 2. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said expandable material is progressively expandable.

Claim 3. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said expandable material is fluid impermeable.

Claim 4. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said expandable material is fluid permeable.

Claim 5. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said screen is configured to allow passage of a fluid constituent of a slurry while impeding passage of a solid constituent of said slurry.

Claim 6. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said screen and said expandable element define an area into which a slurry is accepted and a particulate constituent of said slurry is retained.

Claim 7. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said element is maintained in an expanded condition by grain-to-grain contact of a solid constituent of said slurry.

Claim 8. A seal element as claimed in Claim 5 wherein said fluid is drained off to said base pipe.

Claim 9. A seal element as claimed in Claim 5 wherein said fluid is drained off to a wellbore annulus.

Claim 10. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said element further includes a check valve configured to prevent backflow of a slurry.

Claim 11. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said screen is spaced from said base pipe to facilitate fluid drain off.

Claim 12. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said element includes a slurry entrance passage.

Claim 13. A seal element as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said element includes a fluid exit passage.

Claim 14. A seal element as claimed in Claim 12 wherein said entrance passage includes a check valve.

Claim 15. A seal element as claimed in Claim 12 wherein said exit passage includes a check valve.

Claim 16. A seal system comprising:
a particle laden fluid;
a pump capable of pumping said particle laden fluid;
an expandable element including:
a base pipe;
a screen disposed at said base pipe;
an expandable material disposed radially outwardly of said base pipe and said screen.

Claim 17. A seal system as claimed in Claim 16 wherein said particle laden fluid includes particulate matter coated with a material that bonds individual particles together over at least one of time, temperature, pressure, exposure to a chemical and combinations including at least one of the foregoing.

Claim 18. A seal system as claimed in Claim 17 wherein said chemical is positioned at said expandable element.

Claim 19. A seal system as claimed in Claim 16 wherein said expandable material is progressively expandable.

Claim 20. A seal system as claimed in Claim 16 wherein said system further includes a dehydrating pathway.

Claim 21. A method of creating a wellbore seal comprising:

pumping a solid laden fluid to an expandable element;

pressurizing said element to expand the same; and

dehydrating said solid laden fluid in said expandable element leaving substantially only a solid constituent of said solid laden fluid.

Claim 22. A method creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 further comprising causing grain-to-grain loading of said solid constituent.

Claim 23. A method of creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said dehydrating comprises draining a fluid constituent of said solid laden fluid to a base pipe.

Claim 24. A method of creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said dehydrating comprises draining a fluid constituent of said solid laden fluid to an annulus.

Claim 25. A method of creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said dehydrating comprises draining a fluid constituent of said solid laden fluid through said element.

Claim 26. A method of creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said method includes elastically expanding the wellbore.

Claim 27. A method of creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said method includes plastically expanding the wellbore.

Claim 28. A method of creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said solid laden fluid includes a particular material coated with a substance that bonds individual particles over at least one of time, temperature, pressure, exposure to a chemical and combinations including at least one of the foregoing.

Claim 29. A method of creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said solid laden fluid includes particulate material and a fluid and said particulate is more dense than said fluid.

Claim 30. A method of creating a wellbore seal as claimed in Claim 21 wherein said solid laden fluid includes particulate material and a fluid and said particulate is less dense than said fluid.

Claim 31. An expandable element comprising:

- a base pipe;
- a material disposed at said base pipe capable of being expandable to a larger diametrical dimension and being permeable to a fluid constituent of a solid laden fluid employed to expand said material while being impermeable to a solid constituent of said solid laden fluid.